

Round Spring



Round Spring Cave was formed as underground water moved along joints and fractures in the earth, eroding away the rock.

Today, visitors to the cave may see the end results of eons of work by groundwater. The cave is beautifully decorated with many stalactites and stalagmites as well as cave formations of every description.

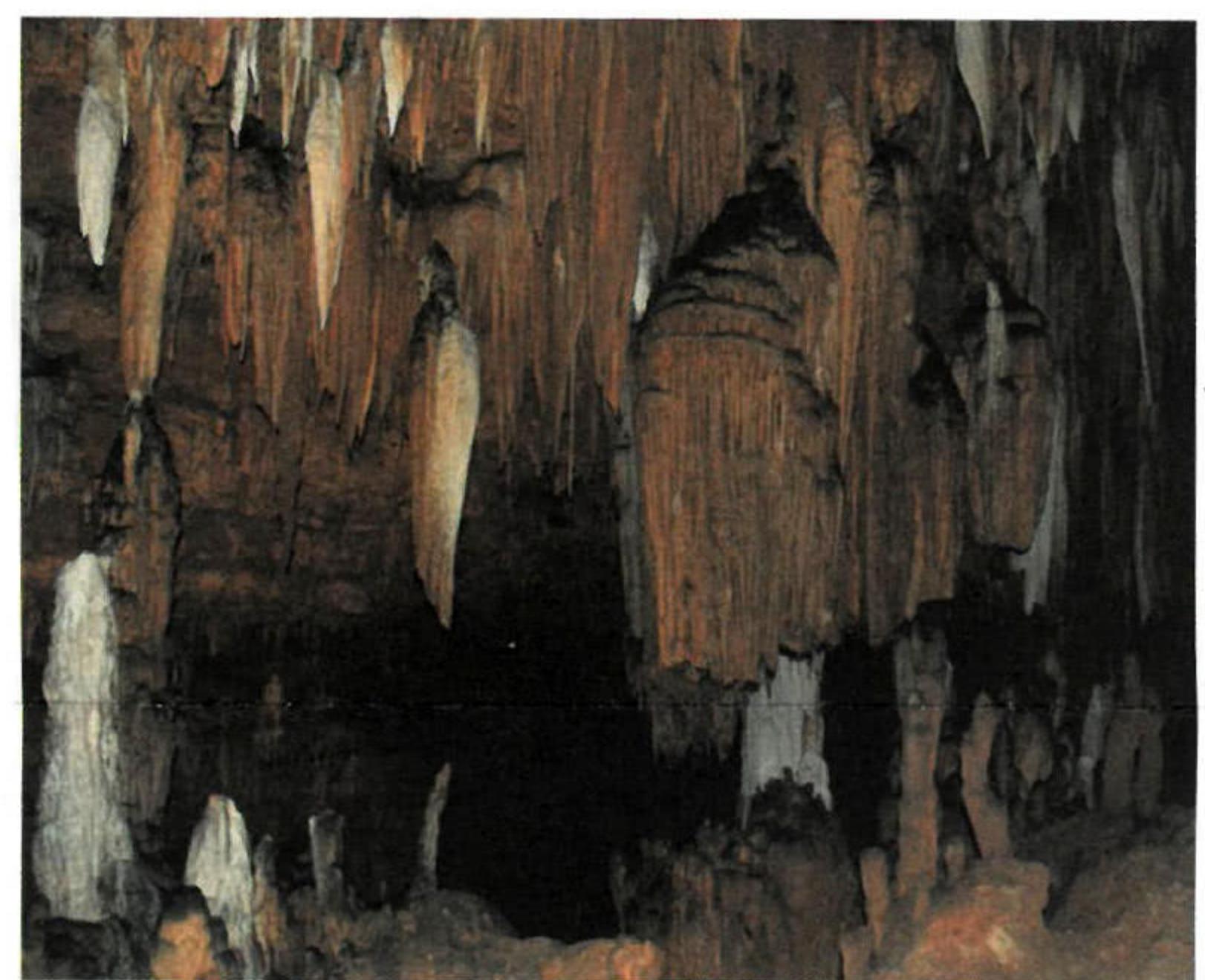
The cave has not been “developed” in the commercial sense. There are no electric lights inside. Visitors are provided with rechargeable lights. Tour groups are kept small to minimize the impact on the cave.

Visitors to the cave may see cave salamanders, the blind grotto salamander, cave crickets and several species of bats. By limiting the number of visitors, the National Park Service hopes to keep the cave as wild as possible both for the benefit of cave wildlife and the enjoyment of those who visit today and in the future.

Round Spring is named for the round opening where a sinkhole formed over the spring's underground conduit. The actual mouth of the spring is on the opposite side of the trail from the famous round opening in the photo.

The water flow from the spring fluctuates with the amount of rainfall the area receives. On an average day, about 26 million gallons of water flow from the 55 foot deep spring.

The water temperature in the spring remains between 55 and 58 degrees year round. Watercress abounds in the cold water, providing shelter for aquatic life including periwinkle snails, insect larvae, and a variety of fish species. Large numbers of birds, deer and small mammals like squirrels, otters and woodchucks visit the spring.



History

Commissioned as a state park in 1925, Round Spring became one of Missouri's first. In the mid-1930's, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCCs) came to Round Spring from their camp at nearby Montauk State Park to help conserve the area's resources and to provide increased visitor facilities. The original Round Spring State Park consisted only of the area to the east of Route 19 and immediately around the spring.

The Round Spring Cave was opened in 1936 as a privately run show cave. Ownership was transferred in 1970 to the National Park Service who now operate it as an educational resource to help people learn about the wonders underground.

The establishment of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways came in 1964. Round Spring, along with Alley Spring and Big Spring state parks, were placed under National Park Service management in 1969. With the addition of the three state parks, Ozark National Scenic Riverways was complete.



The former Round Spring lodge as it looked in the 1960s.

Round Spring Cave: Tours are offered several times daily during the summer months. Group size is limited. Call 573-323-8093 for details.

Campfire Programs are offered at the amphitheater on summer weekends. Check at the Ranger Station for details.

Facilities

Camping: Round Spring campground offers 60 family sites and nine group sites. Six have electrical hook-ups. A dump station is available. They may be reserved by calling 877-444-6777 or by visiting www.recreation.gov

Canoeing: Many canoe rental companies serve the area. Ask for a list at any park facility or visit www.nps.gov/ozar

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